

Synopsis of Exhibit, Japan's Wars, 1894-1911

Quick history. I became interested in this subject when I purchased a cover from Michael Rogers about 10 years ago. I liked the calligraphy of the Japanese script. As fate would have it, the letter inside is six feet long and includes a hand drawn map. I found a collector in England who generously agreed to translate the cover and a part of the letter. The archaic Japanese script is difficult to read and he estimated 6 months of work to do the whole letter. Suffice to say, he gave me the name of the town in Manchuria where the writer, an officer of the Japanese Army, was quartered and also the reason given for the map. The town name is Changu, the date of the letter is the same date as the 1905 Peace Treaty signed between Japan and Russia (in Portsmouth, N.H.) and the map was the troop disposition in Changu. The town is specifically mentioned in the Treaty and the Japanese were to leave the day the letter and the Peace Treaty were signed. They left 40 years later. The letter is too big to display but I will send a scan if interested.

Every officer and 'enlisted' man in the Japanese Army was required to be literate starting with the Meiji restoration of 1870. Ignoring the history of that event, we find an enormous amount of philatelic material sent to Japan from Formosa, China, Manchuria, Korea, Russia, Siberia, Germany, France and other places by officers and men to family and friends back home. I have limited myself to mail that is specifically marked "Military Mail" and thus was free frank. Officers had unlimited franking while as the rank got lower, the number of letters allowed also diminished. There are some wonderful collections of Japanese Military Mail, see references bottom of Title Page, and I decided to exhibit following the armies via the 'field post office' FPO system. Over 20,000 FPO address are recorded in Japanese military history. I have a few, which are noted on the pages, that are unrecorded to this day. I have not mentioned rates and routes, the two major components of Western philatelic exhibits. As the mail was free franked (with a few exceptions), rates are not mentioned. Some franked material went through the civilian mail but was still given 'free' status as noted by the writer on the left hand side of the address (four Japanese characters which you will readily recognize by being so often repeated). A few pieces of postal stationary with pre-printed 1 sen value stamps and some postal cards with 1 or 2 sen stamps were handed over the counter by civilian postal employees to serving military personnel.

Next I should like to address the reason for the title of the exhibit to be on each page. I can not explain why I thought it necessary but to me, personally, I like the looks of it and when I look through almost any of the dozens of books I own concerning the subject of the exhibit and an even wider perusal of other history books, the title is on every page. I can expand and contract the exhibit as requested and adding new material at any of the 128 nexus points is not a problem as all the pages are uniform.

Synopsis of Exhibit, Japan's Wars, 1894-1895

There is little argument that Japan stunned the Chinese and the world when the Japanese Imperial fleet smashed the feudal Empire of China armies at the battle of the Yalu in Korea in 1894. Leaving out all the politics and mendacity which lured the woefully unprepared Qing troops into a modern naval battle, the destruction of the encounter and the shame endured by the Chinese was not repaired for 60 some years until Mao and his PRC Armies. Another problem this exhibitor has encountered with judges not intimately involved with the history, military and economic are the facts about the Boxer Rebellion.

Again avoiding politics, the Boxers were causing economic distress to Japan and the West. Lets look at the actual fighters. Austria-Hungary had a single cruiser based in the Russian concession of Port Arthur, land forced to be handed over by the Qing. The A-H Navy also sent SMS Kaiserin und Konigin, SMS Aspern and a company of Marines. To make sure A-H economic interests were safe. 4 warships and 296 Marines. No official war declared.

Russia sent 10 large warships, 750 marines and 12,400 mostly illiterate troops.

United Kingdom sent 8 warships and 2,020 marines and 10,000 troops

The French Third Republic sent 5 warships, 390 marines and 3,120 troops.

The United States sent 2 warships, 295 marines and 3,125 troops.

German Empire sent 5 warships, 600 marines and 300 troops.

The Kingdom of Italy sent 2 warships, 80 marines and 2500 troops.

Japan sent 18 warships, 540 marines and 20,300 troops.

There was epic looting, murder, rape, atrocities of every sort. Japan supplied over half of the fighting men. The Japanese Diet directed the movements of the armies in the field. The British offered £1,000,000 if the Japanese Army would help lift the siege of Peking. The Japanese also suffered two-thirds of the losses.

It looked like a war, it sounded like a war, the troops died like being in a war: it was a war.

The final frame was created because the Russo-Japanese War did not really end in 1905. The Japanese goal of local Asiatic hegemony was realized only when the King of Korea was deposed and the royal line ended. The cancels of the periods are rare and not often seen in exhibits outside of Japan and Korea.

It is important to remember that some of the FPO cancels lasted only an hour or two in some places. My exhibit follows army movements, not streets. Thank you.

JAPAN's WARS 1894 - 1911.

In the late 19th Century and early 20th Century history offered a dramatic illustration of international relations in the Far Eastern political situation with the outcome being the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895), the Boxer Uprising (1900) and the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), resulting eventually in Japan gaining the territories of Formosa (Taiwan), Manchuria Kwantung and Railways, Southern Sakhalin (Karafuto) Island and eventually the territory of Korea. This exhibit shows the postal history of these Wars and the subsequent military occupation of Korea until the 1910 Annexation by Japan with Japan's ultimate object of Korea becoming a territory of Japan.

The exhibit is shown in the following format and the items shown are classified from scarce to rare mainly based upon the usage via the Field Post Offices and the military cancellations applied during these wars.

Frame 1	Sino-Japanese War; military mail from Korea and Manchuria,	1894 - 1895
Frame 2	Sino-Japanese War; military mail Manchuria, Formosa and China.	1895 - 1897
Frame 3	The Boxer Uprising; military mail from the International Force in China.	1900 - 1901
Frame 4	The Russo-Japanese War; military mail from Japanese & Russian Forces in Korea and Manchuria.	1902 - 1904
Frame 5	The Russo-Japanese War; military mail from Japanese & Russian Forces in Manchuria.	1904 - 1905
Frame 6	The Russo-Japanese War; military mail from Japanese & Russian Forces in Korea and Manchuria. Chinese Eastern Railway.	1904 - 1905
Frame 7	The Russo-Japanese War; military mail from Japanese & Russian Forces in Manchuria, Korea, Sakhalin, Russian, Japanese and British Prisoner of War mail.	1904 - 1906
Frame 8	Post Russo-Japanese War; military mail from Japanese & Russian Forces in Manchuria and Korea. The usage of the Uch'eso cancels in Korea.	1905 - 1911

Important items of mail are exhibited in Frames 1 and 2 from The Sino-Japanese War period (1894 - 1897), these include rare and exceptional items such as the first mail carried by Japanese ship 'Nagato-maru' to Manchuria in October 1894, Mail travelling through No. 16 Field Post Office of the Japanese 2nd Army, Manchuria, in May 1895, the earliest mail recorded at No. 4 Field Post Office, 30th May 1895 Manchuria. Then mail at No. 2 and No. 3 Field Post Offices at Taipei (April 1896) and Hsinchu (June 1896) Formosa. With the occupation of Wei-hai-wei, China, important items of mail are shown with an exceptional item of printed matter mail being exhibited.

The Boxer Uprising, Frame 3, is illustrated by mail from the International forces, German, French, Russian, British Indian Army and Japanese, with mail through the Japanese post offices at Tungchow and Yangtsun being of particular interest.

The Russo-Japanese War commences at Frame 4, commencing on the first page with a rare item from the Russian post office at Dalnii, Japanese mail from Korea through Field Post Offices with very short opening periods, Russian mail from the Red Cross Society and various scarce postal cancels.

Frame 5 shows Japanese earliest recorded mail through a number of different Field Post Offices, Japanese naval mail, Russian mail from a Russian Hospital Ship, Manchuli Railway Postal Branch, Kharbin Hospital Suburb and Mukden cancels.

The 6th Frame exhibits Japanese earliest recorded mail through Field Post Offices, Military Observer and Diplomatic Mail, Russian mail of the Chinese Eastern Railways showing scarce and rare items.

Frame 7 shows Japanese mail from Korea Occupation Army, 13th Independent Division (Sakhalin), Russian and Japanese Prisoner of War mail, an exceptional item of a British Prisoner of War, from the 'Sado-maru' captured by the Russian Ship 'Rurik' and imprisoned in Russia as a prisoner of the Russo-Japanese War.

The final Frame 8, commences with rare Field Post Office cancels, then proceeds to show the Japanese Occupation of Korea from 1905 to 1911, including the Annexation of Korea, illustrated by a rare collection of Uch'eso Provisional / Temporary Postal Station cancels.

References;
 SUZUKI Takao, 'A Study on Locating of Japanese Field Post Offices, Large Gold Medal collection 'The Russo-Japanese War'.
 KENNETH G. CLARK, 'The History & Postal History of Japan's Wars', Large Gold Medal collection 'The Russo-Japanese War'.
 Dr. RAYMOND CASEY, Grand Prix Collection 'The Russo-Japanese War'.